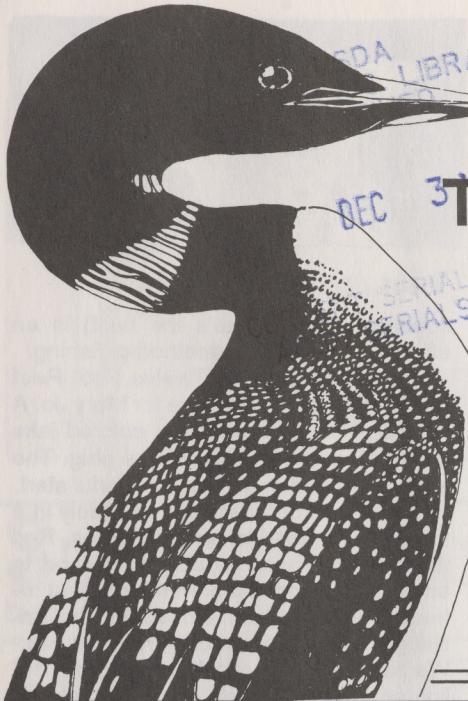


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# THE SUPERIOR EXPERIENCE

THE SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST



*Caring for the land...Serving the people*

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## SPRING FOR LAKE TROUT

by Michael Furtman

Spring is born painfully here in the north country. Coming only after a person starts to worry he might be witnessing the beginning of another ice-age, it is often announced overnight. Winter clenches its icy claws defiantly, even into April, with nights where lows might be twelve degrees. But, inevitably, a day will come where a brilliant sun will rub the earth awake and the temperature will shoot to fifty. Three feet of ice on the lakes ages rapidly and suddenly turns pock-marked and black. Within days it soaks up water and sinks. Spring has come.

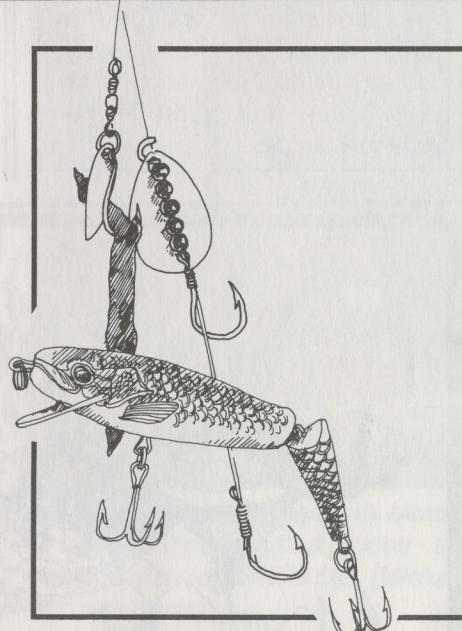
To the angler, such events do not go unnoticed. Rotting ice and pent up adrenaline combine to send shock waves to the brain. Even in one's sleep, an angler begins to smell water, see the aspen buds swell, can feel the throb of fish on the end of the line. I know.

Which is what brought Mary Jo (my wife) and I to a small unnamed lake trout lake deep in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (actually, it does have a name, but as long as I'm telling this story, it will remain secret). Nearly two feet of snow huddled in the shadows of north facing slopes, an interesting thing to portage a canoe through. A green blush was sweeping across ridge tops, the aspen leaves the size of mouse ears. Birches, late starters compared to aspens, held back on sprouting, as if waiting to see if the popples had success. The little lake lay chill and serene, the water blue-black and just begging for me to drop in our canoe. I obliged.

At this time of the year the lake trout are very near the surface. Water temperatures shiver near 48 degrees, a temperature loved by lakers, and these deep denizens swim up to a surface world often denied them by heat. We eased two orange and gold minnow imitating plugs out behind the canoe as we paddled down the shore. They throbbed ten feet below the surface.

Ecstasy, I thought. That's what this first fishing trip is. It is water gurgling down the side of your boat, the promise of warmth in the sun on your neck, air that actually has odors again after a winter of freeze-drying, the possibility you may actually catch a fish.

Somewhere in the watery world below us a lake trout and my Rapala met. This trout, hungry after its winter doldrums, struck the plug, sending a message to my wrist. I set the hook. A powerful tug answered, set my heart to thumping. In a few minutes the fish's runs became smaller, the olive and silver trout's dives toward the



bottom became shorter. Soon it was doing the lake trout twirl, trying to roll itself up in my monofilament in one last attempt to escape. I slipped a landing net beneath it, hoisted its five pounds into the air and held it up for the two of us to admire.

Have you ever seen these northland lake trout? Have you looked closely at their orange fins, the subtle shades of rose, gold and silver that lays sparkling between the dark, wavy mottling of their sides? So beautiful.

I slipped the trout on a stringer. It would make a wonderful dinner for us, deep red flesh a rich treat we would cook with care after we made camp.

I took the water temperature, examined the topographic map for the water depth and flipped on my little fish finder. Twelve Foot Reef. That's what we named the spot. We headed back over it.

To each side of the reef the lake dropped darkly to over fifty feet. On the outside of those two fifty foot depths rose more rocks; to the west an open water reef that nearly came to the surface; to the east, the lake's shore. In other words, this little reef, stranded between the two deep trenches, was a prime spot for lake trout, provided them with everything they could wish. During no part of the year would they ever stray far.

In the fall, lake trout spawn on such reefs. When the water cools in late September, these trout suspend above the bouldery bottoms and deposit their eggs and milt, letting the living clouds settle down to the rocks. In the spring, lake trout return to these same reefs to feel the

## SPRING/ SUMMER



*To many, spring lake trout trips are just an excuse to enjoy the northland's rebirth, campfires and sunsets. (Michael Furtman photo)*

spring sun and to feed. Only when the water is cool will they come so near the surface (often only a couple of feet down). In the summer, and much of the winter, they lay off to the side in deep water, finding there the temperature they prefer.

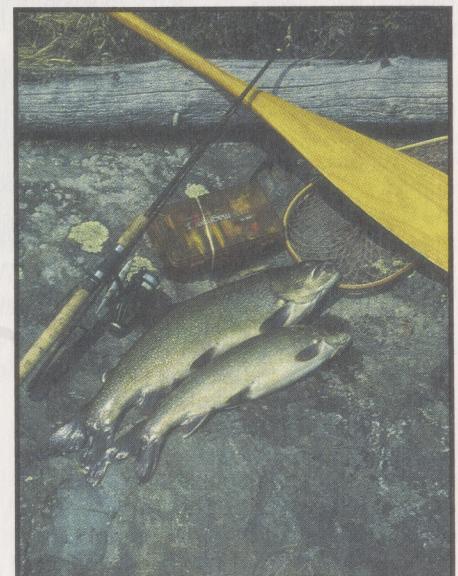
In the Superior National Forest, both within and outside the BWCAW, lies the nation's densest, and largest, concentration of lake trout lakes. Some lakes are barely a mile long, others are measured in many hundreds, or even thousands, of acres. All have one thing in common; cool depths with plenty of oxygen. Lake trout can not exist in any other place. But when spring arrives, the lakes are cool throughout and the lake trout move to the surface. At no other time will they be so susceptible to light lures and tackle.

The best lake trout fishing occurs about a week to ten days after ice-out. This also happens to be about the opening of Minnesota's fishing season - usually the second Saturday in May. Since the fish are shallow, standard medium or light fishing tackle is all that's needed, along with a selection of spoons and plugs of silver and gold, tinged with fluorescent orange, chartreuse or bright blue. A handful of 3/8th, 1/4 and 1/2 ounce bead chain sinkers are handy to have, just in case you must follow the fish deeper. Rarely in the spring, even

into early June, will the trout have sunk to below twenty-five feet.

Trolling is a good method of finding the trout. Once located, drifting while casting

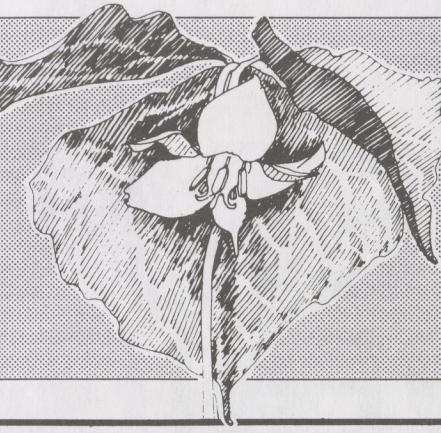
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*The Superior National Forest is home to the beautiful native lake trout. (Michael Furtman photo)*

# SPRING / SUMMER

...continued



## SEVEN BEAVER LAKE ADVENTURES

by Dave Worshek

Seven Beaver Lake is the headwaters for the St. Louis River. The lake is located in the heart of the Laurentian Ranger District, approximately 15 miles east of Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota. This area, which includes Seven Beaver Lake, Round Lake, Long Lake and the St. Louis River, is a remote and relatively undeveloped area best known for its good fishing, mainly walleye but also northern and various other species.

The Seven Beaver area is really quite unique. One generally won't see other people in here, the exceptions being holiday weekends and the opening of fishing, grouse hunting and deer hunting seasons. The only development is this area is the Cypress Mining Company railroad tracks, an ORV trail, five Forest Service dispersed campsites, (one contains an Adirondack Shelter, a three-sided log structure). The campsites have a firegrate, tent pad and wilderness-type latrine. Offering something for just about everyone, a person can canoe, hike, use an ATV, fish, hunt, observe wildlife and camp. You can find similar experiences to those in the BWCAW, but with some added advantages. When going to the Seven Beaver area you do not need a permit, a reservation, nor are there restrictions on cars and bottles, motors or group size, as you will find in the BWCAW.

Access into this area, though not easy, can be gained at Skibo Mill on the St. Louis River or by an off road vehicle (ORV) trail

from Forest Road 418 which takes you into Round Lake. The Skibo Mill access road is very rough and is recommended for high clearance vehicles. The ORV trail access ends up at a landing which is privately owned. The owner allows use of this landing but we do ask that you show respect and help keep it clean.

To get to Seven Beaver Lake via the St. Louis River from Skibo Mill, you will be going up river. Normally not too difficult, the distance is approximately 6 miles. The river is usually calm except after the spring run off or after heavy rains. On the way to Seven Beaver Lake you'll find three portages in place for your convenience. The portages are located so that you have that option to go around some rapids that may be too shallow to canoe through. There is also a portage on this route that will take you into Long Lake.

When going up the St. Louis River you will find yourself in some remote and wild country. You are likely to see a wide variety of waterfowl, birds, deer, moose, bear and other wildlife, as well as many different species of trees and plants. This is a colorful, scenic trip in the fall when the leaves are changing color. If you like to fish, you have a good chance of catching walleyes, northern, bass and other species in the lakes and river.

You can also get to Seven Beaver Lake by the ORV trail. If you are into using all terrain vehicles (ATV's) this is the way to

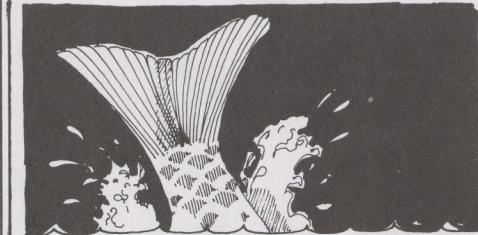
go. The trail is relatively short, approximately 1 1/2 miles but is very rough. It has deep holes, which are normally wet and there are quite a few rocks to dodge. Some hardy people have been known to hike in on this trail and some have even carried a canoe. This trail is not set up as a portage and there are no canoe rests along the way. It is a scenic trail, especially in the fall when leaves are changing color.

We want you to come and enjoy the Seven Beaver area. While there, we do ask that you pack out your trash and leave the area clean and natural looking. For a safe and enjoyable trip we also remind you to wear your life preservers, travel with a partner, let someone know where you are going, and when you should be out. Watch out for shallow, slippery rocks when canoeing or portaging.

For more information on the Seven Beaver area you may contact the Laurentian Ranger District, 318 Forestry Road, Aurora, MN 55705 or call (218) 229-3371.

There are also several other canoe routes (areas) outside the BWCAW. If you would like information on these areas you may contact: Superior National Forest, Forest Supervisor, P.O. Box 338, Duluth, MN 55801, or call (218) 720-5324.

Dave Worshek works for the Forest Service on the Laurentian Ranger District Recreation Staff seeking new adventures in the Superior's wilds.



### TROUT...continued

spoons or jigs (white's the best) is an effective and relaxing method of fishing.

Another pass over Twelve Foot Reef had proven lucky, this time for Mary Jo. A smaller, but more brilliantly colored lake trout had fallen for the orange plug. The spring had gotten off to a wonderful start.

In camp, trout fillets curled crisply in a frying pan teased by yellow flames. Red fillets lay wrapped in plastic, packed in snow behind the camp. Mauve sunset retreated to the west, rushed by the onslaught of stars advancing from the east. We sat near the warm fire, munching delightedly on fresh fish and hot, buttered bannock.

Spring may be born painfully here, but it is a birth worth witnessing.

Michael Furtman is a professional writer who has written two books on the canoe country and whose heart has been lost to the region's enchanting beauty.

## WILDERNESS PATHS TO THE PAST

by Mitch Bouchonville

As I alternate glances between a small scrap of paper in my left palm and a half-o'-room sprawl of camping equipment, food and clothing, I notice an annoying tilting watercolor to my right. I straighten the painting that quietly invites me to witness the exchange of furs and goods between a deerskin-clad Ojibway clan and two assumed French Voyageurs. The artist imaginatively recorded the event along the autumn banks of a gentle stream, a stream like hundreds found along any of the numerous canoe routes afforded within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

Lingering over the painting and the thought that my own upcoming wilderness adventure, within a part of the Superior National Forest's 1.3 million acre BWCAW, actually will trace the paths of thousands of Native American Dakota and Ojibway people (designated by governmental bodies as Sioux and Chippewa, respectively), European fur traders, explorers, developers, and adventurers, I become awestruck once again of the spectacular canoe country's enduring beauty. Noting that the painting depicts two birch bark canoes pulled securely on the streambank, I'm reminded that this unique summer mode of transportation is a practical contribution of

a special central Algonquian group which includes the Ojibway, Potawatomi, Ottawa, and other tribes.

After my first BWCAW canoe trip, I became insatiable for knowledge of the area's history and people. With each subsequent wilderness experience, I became even more endeared to the great Native tribes and their customs to guide me through the countless miles of waterways and portages. To me, the quintessential wilderness user is one who understands and protects the spiritual value of the area, as well as the physical beauty, as revered and practiced by these original people.

On each wilderness canoe trip I take I try to share my limited knowledge with whomever cares to listen. I try to reminisce around the campfire glow, after the dinner has been eaten and gear stowed safely away for the night. My audience tends to be more captive at this time since most of the party's muscles demand relaxation after a hard day's paddle and three or four trying portages. Most will at least listen, a few may add to the dreamweaving.

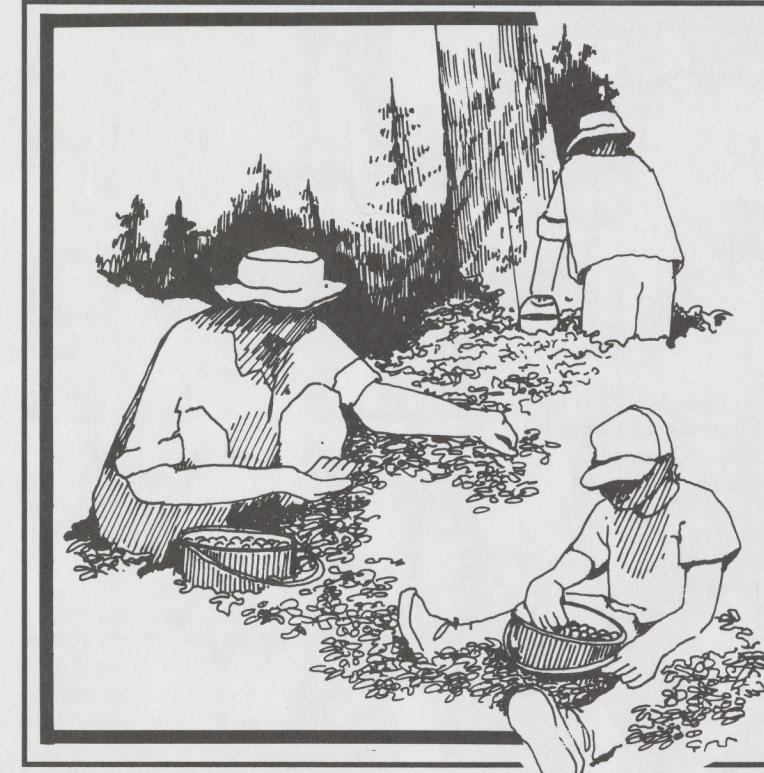
My fellow travelers and I try to imagine how many varied people before us camped on this protected, yet, relatively breezy point for the night. Were they amazed at the brilliant oranges, reds, and yellows

offered by the passage of day into night? Did the distant howl of wolves raise the hair on the back of their necks, too? And most importantly, how did they cope with the endless onslaught of mosquitoes?

During a day's travels, my mind wanders and continues the wonder of how previous hearts reacted to the sight of a cow moose and her young traipsing across a meandering stream. How many others witnessed a dozen loons unexplainably swim towards each other cautiously, carefully, only to then explode in one calliope of loon laughter and feather beating?

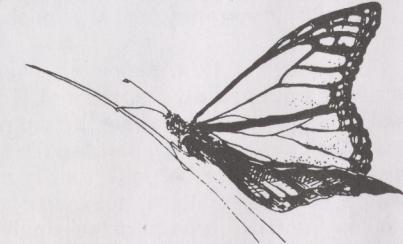
While unloading the canoe at the beginning of a day's last mile of up and down portage, did my associates from the past wince like me upon hoisting the canoe overhead, or more likely, were they in better shape than me and carried the gear overland to the next lake with nary a shortness of breath?

My reverie is shattered by the reality of my wife's voice demanding that I get on

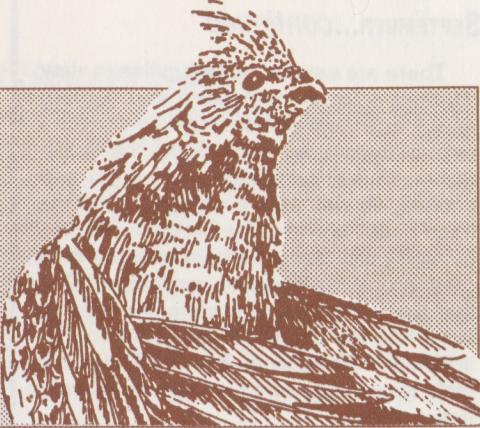


with the packing for tomorrow's trip. I finish scrutinizing the painting on the wall and anticipate that a full night's dreamworld of the past will guide me through the near future's adventure. I hope I leave a legacy of use as noble and as protective as wilderness travelers of the past.

Mitch Bouchonville finds his home on the Gunflint Ranger District. When he isn't exploring the wilderness he serves as the District's Assistant Ranger.



# FALL



## SUPERIOR GROUSE HUNTING

by Michael Furtman

covert. noun. a thicket. a shady place . . .

Covers. I was thinking about covers while wheeling down the gravel forest road. I was thinking how hunters refer to their personal little thickets where they find ruffed grouse and how intimate they become with these locales.

Many of us have a piece of hunting turf we know well and love. Most hunters' covers are such that if you walk straight through you'll come out on the next county road or someone's back forty. The "covert" I was going to hunt this day defies walking through, is big enough that if one got turned around and lost his bearing, he'd likely never be seen again. My covert is three million acres wide.

Now, obviously, this "covert" isn't solely mine. In fact you and I own it together. The land I'm talking about is the Superior National Forest located in northeastern Minnesota. Superior is the largest national forest located in the lower forty-eight states and is the third largest overall. Being on the edge of the Great Lakes grouse belt, it provides a unique opportunity for the hunter to pursue grouse in a huge area of nearly all public land, much of it good grouse habitat.

I was thinking about all of this when I caught a movement on the roadside. Hitting the brakes brought the old truck to a halt in a cloud of dust while my black Labrador retriever, Gypsy, squashed her nose against the windshield (she always rides up front with me when we're alone, doesn't yours?). Up ahead strutted a grouse in the gravel. While I watched, the bird ran off into the forest.

I eased the door open and slid quietly out, a difficult task with seventy pounds of dog trying to pass between you and the steering wheel. I left the truck, grabbed the gun and two shells (optimist!), collared the dog and headed toward where the soon-to-be-late grouse had sauntered into cover.

The grouse had gone an amazing distance. When we finally caught up to it, the bird had stationed itself on the backside of a huge spruce and when Gypsy flushed it, I had naught but the green-black hulking tree to shoot at. I passed.

Still, it was an auspicious start to our day. We had at least seen one grouse, which, I figured, is better to report should we get skunked (who, me?) than not even seeing a bird. I've always had the feeling that acquaintances and neighbors think you're a bum when they see you going hunting as often as they see me go, but when you come home with no birds, they not only think you are a bum but that you probably slept all day under a tree, making you a lazy bum.

Back in the truck we headed to our original destination, a ten-year-old clearcut. We were driving to this spot because grouse prefer young forests, especially young



A compass, a favorite shotgun, beautiful fall scenery and ruffed grouse - the makings of a memorable day. (Michael Furtman photo)

aspen forest. And when you cut trees down in Minnesota, aspen is usually the first tree to grow back.

Clearcuts of this type are part of the overall U.S. Forest Service plan for the two million acres of Superior National Forest that lie outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Because of the advent of particle board and other wood products that make use of aspen, the U.S. Forest Service is shifting more of its projected land use toward growing aspen and away from growing softwoods used in saw logs.

The Forest Service intensively manages 50,000 acres of the Superior for ruffed grouse production. But the improvements don't end there. Because Superior National Forest is also managed for increased aspen production, as well as improved habitat for moose (the eastern half) and whitetail deer (the western half), both heavily reliant on forest openings and aspen, grouse hunting across the entire forest will improve over the next few decades. Definitely a bright spot when you consider how much habitat for grouse and other creatures across our continent is being lost.

All of the Superior National Forest is open to hunting and there are numerous opportunities available. With the exception of the roadless wilderness area (approximately the northern third) hunting access is good. The Forest Service maintains many hundreds of miles of good gravel roads suitable for even the family sedan. Those hunters who have a four-wheel-drive truck with good ground clearance, can also travel



Mazes of secondary roads can lead you to spectacular autumn scenery. (Kawishiwi Ranger District photo)

many primitive roads and abandoned logging trails. But you shouldn't drive much. The best bet is to find a likely looking spot and stretch your legs by walking old trails.

The Forest Service has many beautiful campgrounds scattered throughout Superior National Forest and they are typically nearly empty during grouse season. It is also legal, outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, to camp where you wish in the Superior as long as you are careful with fire and leave no trace of your passing.

Gypsy and I hunted our clearcut with leisure. There were no other hunters in the area. It was the third week in September and the forest was ablaze in colors, the aspen a splendid trembling gold. We flushed about ten grouse and, because of the still heavy cover, we managed to shoot only two. It was enough. I knew before coming the leaves would make the hunting tough, but I wanted to be here when the leaves were in full color to enjoy the spectacle. There would be time to come back when the leaves had fallen, the air a bit

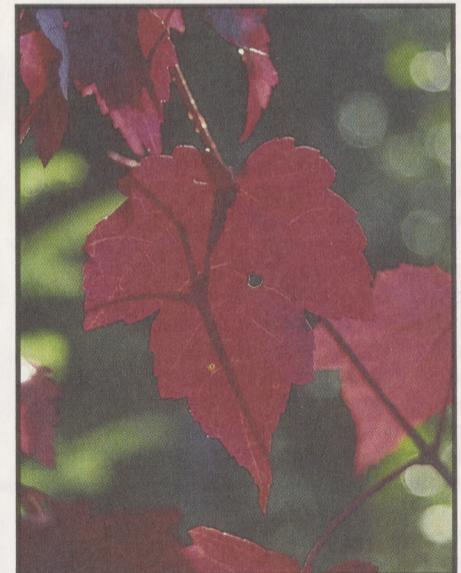
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## SUPER SEPTEMBER

by Dave Tucci

Reserve the last two weeks in September for a trip to the Superior National Forest which will be both satisfying and memorable for the whole family. See nature's brilliant colors and experience the crisp fall air and colors dancing in reflections across the open water of many northern Minnesota lakes. Signed auto tours, scenic overlooks, and trails are all there to provide access to these memorable views. You'll find opportunities to travel by car, mountain bike, canoe or boat, or foot. Some of the tours have brochures that highlight historical sites and events.

The North Shore of Lake Superior is a favorite among visitors. The Superior Hiking Trail offers spectacular vistas of reds, yellows, and orange hues produced by a variety of hardwood trees with the blue of Lake Superior as the backdrop. The Oberleveaux loop just north of Tofte offers excellent overlooks along the hiking trail and real opportunities for photographers to get some superb shots. Carlton Peak, also near Tofte, offers similar experiences and there are opportunities to take short loop hikes from Highway 61 up the shore and back again. The Superior Hiking Trail is planned to some day go from Duluth, paralleling Lake Superior, all the way to the Canadian border. For the long distance backpacker, there are campsites available along the trail for overnight if you prefer sleeping under the stars to the comforts of the many fine resorts, cabins, or motels along Highway 61. For more information contact the Superior Hiking Trail Association, Box 2175, Tofte, MN 55615.



The Superior National Forest puts on its brightest attire the last weeks of September. (Isabella Work Station photo)

Further up the North Shore of Lake Superior there are many opportunities for viewing by auto tours, bike routes, or trails for short hikes in and near the town of Grand Marais. The USFS District Ranger's office at Grand Marais (55604) has recreation opportunity guides for five scenic overlooks, five short hikes and two or three auto and biking tours. Just drop them a note or stop by - they will be glad to give you copies.

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## FALL ...continued



## HIGH ON SUPERIOR HIKING

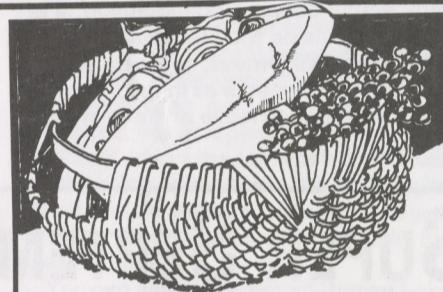
by Sue Hix

Those who have never experienced Minnesota's North Shore of Lake Superior may neither understand nor fully appreciate the enthusiasm of those who have. After all, it's hard to imagine a place in the Midwest that can promise nature-lovers the panoramas and physical challenge of mountainous terrain without the effects of altitude, especially when that same place can offer views of the sun or moon rising over a horizon of ocean-like swells stretching as far as the eye can see. Here solitude reigns and virtual wilderness abides only a mile or two from civilization and its amenities. The North Shore is all of this - and more.

In 1979, when construction of the Superior Hiking Trail began, the public gained another means of taking in the many attractions of the North Shore. Once completed, the trail will permit nearly 250 miles of continuous hiking from Duluth to the Canadian border. With approximately eighty percent of the trail traversing public land, hikers will be able to explore seven state parks, two state forests, and the Superior National Forest. Planners have taken care to minimize the trail's impact on nature, however. Cleared to a width of just four feet, its treadway is but eighteen inches and designed for foot traffic only.

The Superior Hiking Trail is a product of cooperative efforts of the United States Forest Service, the state of Minnesota, and the Superior Hiking Trail Association. Although the trail's construction has been made possible mostly by state funding, its maintenance is the responsibility of the association, which coordinates the efforts of members and other dedicated individuals and groups who "adopt" sections of the trail. Though the trail is public and its use free to all, the trail's livelihood depends almost exclusively on membership fees and volunteer support.

During the 1990 hiking season hikers will have approximately 130 miles of trail from which to choose when planning their North Shore adventures. The only difficulty is deciding how best to enjoy the area and the trail. Users may plan day hikes from



state park campsites or lakeshore resorts (many resort operators offer shuttle service), or they may decide on a multi-day trip that requires packing in all necessities (there are campsites every five or six miles along the trail). Since the trail is accessible from countless points along Highway 61, tourists may even stop for a short hike to stretch their legs before continuing to other destinations.

The trail itself appeals to a variety of interests. Challenging without being technical, it allows individual hikers to decide whether their experience will be a physical workout or a less taxing but equally satisfying exertion. As it climbs to ridges and drops into deep forest, it permits the alert observer to sight hawks, deer, moose, and countless other creatures. To anyone who's willing, it also gives lessons in geology, botany, and entomology. During the autumn, hikers are treated to spectacular, colorful vistas as well as the chance to admire thousands of raptors as these birds of prey concentrate along this migration corridor.

Come enjoy the splendor of the North Shore and the joys of the Superior Hiking Trail. For more information contact the Gunflint or Tofte U.S. Forest Service districts or write the Superior Hiking Trail Association at P.O. Box 2175, Tofte, MN 55615.

Sue Hix is a fan of the quiet sports. When she isn't skiing, hiking or climbing, she can be found working in a Twin Cities bank.

## SEPTEMBER...continued

There are several opportunities to view different color combinations and explore nature and view wildlife in a less crowded setting by getting away from the North Shore. The bright yellows of aspen and birches, as well as the golden Tamarack trees near the end of the fall color season, provide fascinating contrast with the dark greens of the pines and spruces. Add to this the browns and orange from dying ferns and the shades of grey rock formations and outcroppings and you'll have the makings for excellent pictures and memories.

State Highway 135 from Virginia to Ely has several places where long distances of color can be viewed. The area near Giants Ridge Ski Hill and north of there is particularly scenic.

The portion of U.S. Highway 53 from Virginia to Cook provides excellent variety and contrast and is exceptionally scenic in late September. For more information on opportunities in the Cook area, contact the Forest Service office in Cook, or stop at the visitor center in Orr.

Besides maps of auto tour routes, here are a couple of options that may appeal to you. Try taking County Road 23 from Orr past Myrtle Lake to downtown Buyck. There you can rent or put in your canoe in the Vermilion River and experience some of the beautiful fall colors while paddling the river. This is one of the few areas away from the North Shore where there is a good number of maple trees to provide some of the reds and oranges. Also, northern pike fishing is exceptionally good this time of year.

From downtown Buyck, take County Road 24 to the quaint and picturesque village of Crane Lake. From the village, you can hike a newly constructed interpretive trail to the Vermilion River Gorge. The theme is "travel in time", and the interpretation takes you from present day all the way back to 1731.

There is also a very short side trip from County Road 24 just south of Crane Lake to Vermilion River Falls. Here you can fish, picnic, take a short hike or just sit back and listen to the water flow over the falls and bask in the sun and enjoy a beautiful day!

Dave Tucci of the Public Service Staff in the Superior National Forest headquarters office in Duluth specializes in recreation and marketing.



## GROUSE...continued

nippier and the landscape more somber. Near the end of the hunt Gypsy flushed a woodcock. It twittered quickly to what seemed a tremendous speed and I shot, thinking as I did that I aimed too far behind. Gypsy plunged into the dense young aspen and found the bird I was sure I had missed, a pleasant surprise to end our day. The three birds would make a splendid meal.

## CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAILS IN THE SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST

### LAURENTIAN DISTRICT

#### Big Aspen Trails

Length: 20 miles

Difficulty: Easy, moderate, and difficult

#### Bird Lake Trails

Length: 18 miles

Difficulty: Easy and moderate

#### Giants Ridge Ski Area

Length: 31 miles

Difficulty: Easy, moderate and difficult

#### Lookout Mountain Trails

Length: 15 miles

Difficulty: Moderate and difficult

#### Sturgeon River Ski Trail

Length: 20 miles

Difficulty: Moderate and difficult

### LACROIX RANGER DISTRICT

#### Ashawa Trail

Length: 15 miles (and growing)

Difficulty: Moderate

#### Crane Lake Neighborhood Trails

Length: 5 miles

Difficulty: Easy and moderate

### KAWISHIWI RANGER DISTRICT

#### Birch Lake Plantation

Length: 4 miles

Difficulty: Easy

#### Flash Lake Trails

Length: 8 miles

Difficulty: Easy and moderate

#### Hidden Valley Recreation Area

Length: 11 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

#### Jasper Hills Ski Area:

Length: 22 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

#### North Arm Trails

Length: 34 miles

Difficulty: Moderate and difficult

### ISABELLA WORK STATION

#### Flathorn-Gegoka Ski Touring Area

Length: 15 miles

Difficulty: Easy and moderate

### TOFTE RANGER DISTRICT

#### North Shore Mountains Ski Trail

Length: 134 miles

Difficulty: Easy, moderate and difficult

### GUNFLINT RANGER DISTRICT

#### Pincushion Mountain Trails

Length: 15 miles

Difficulty: Easy, moderate and difficult

#### Gunflint Trails

Length: 85 miles

Difficulty: Easy, moderate and difficult

For directions and descriptive information, contact the Ranger District from the phone number listed on the back of the map insert.

On the drive home we stopped twice, once to watch bull moose feed serenely on the edge of a new clearcut. No other animal can at the same time appear so ungainly and yet majestic. A few miles down the road I was surprised to see a coyote hunting mice in another young forest opening. It was quite a thrill to watch it pounce and flip the mouse into the air, catching and devouring it all in one quick motion. A lesson in where our hunting dogs' instinct comes from. It was apparent that the aspen regeneration policy of the U.S. Forest Service would benefit many creatures, not just the ruffed grouse.

After shooting a few photos of the coyote I started the truck and headed for home. I bid the little wolf goodbye and asked him to spare a few grouse for me. You see, I plan on hunting Superior National Forest again soon.

## Greetings From the Forest Supervisor

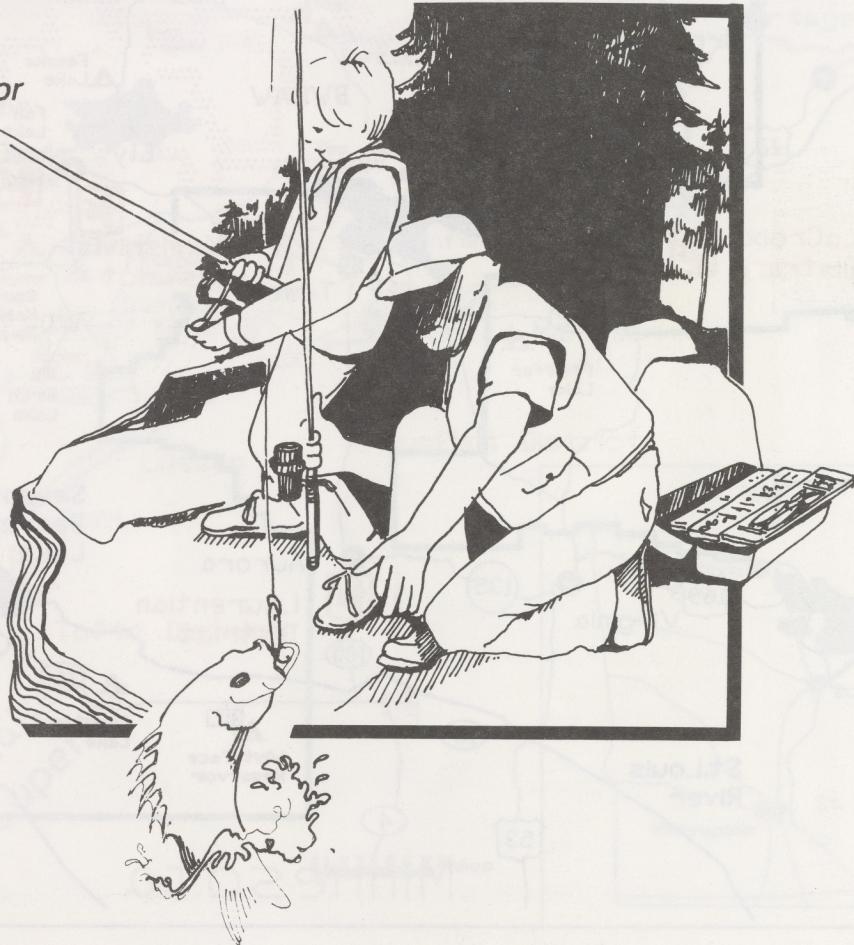
Welcome to this second edition of the Superior Experience Magazine. Thousands of people live here in the Northland or spend their vacations here because they enjoy the exciting variety of outdoor attributes this land of forests and lakes provides.

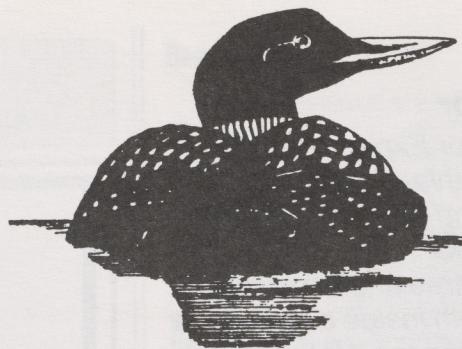
The Superior National Forest is part of this - three and a half million acres in the Northeast corner of Minnesota - both inside and outside the famous Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Not only does the National Forest provide recreation experiences but it provides important habitat for wild animals, renewable resources for society, and a sustained biodiversity and productivity for present and future generations.

A National Forest is a living thing that constantly changes whether it is being managed like a wilderness, where nature is allowed to play a dominant role, or as a working forest where people more actively make alterations to provide goods and services from among the many resources. As society grows and changes, its expectations of what a forest should provide also change. The U.S. Forest Service is the organization that tries to be responsive to providing for those changes on National Forest System lands while at the same time assuring that the scenic, cultural and historic resources are protected and the productive potential of the land is maintained.

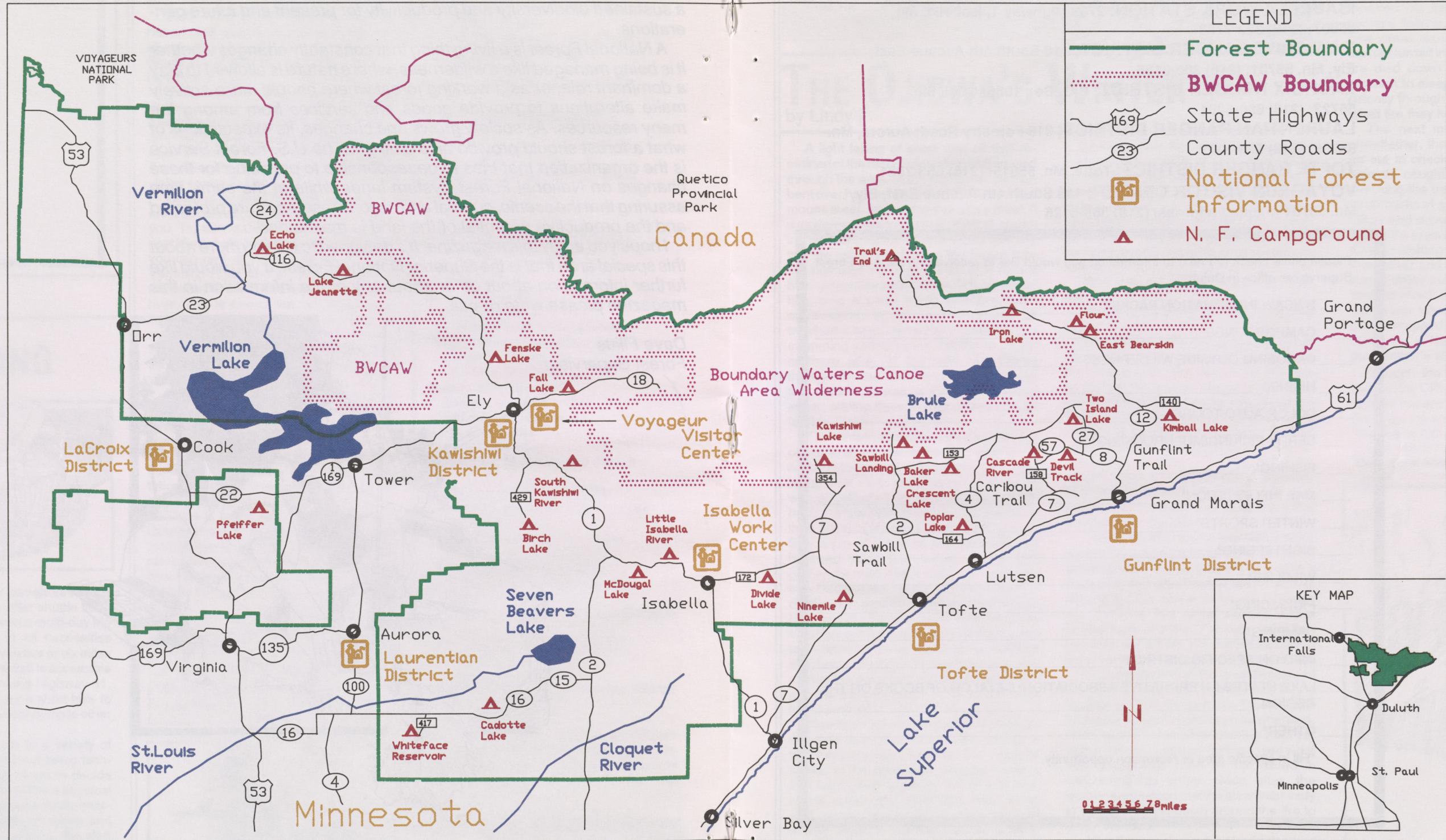
I hope you enjoy this magazine. It's designed to tell you more about this special area that is the Superior National Forest. If you would like further information about us or about any of the information in this magazine please write or call.

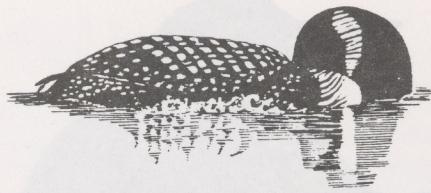
Dave Filius  
Forest Supervisor





# SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST





## **CAMPGROUNDS, BWCA TRAVEL, GENERAL**

### **For More Information . . .**

**SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST;** Forest Supervisor Office; P.O. Box 338; Duluth, Mn. 55801; (218) 720-5324

**GUNFLINT RANGER DISTRICT;** P.O. Box 308; Grand Marais, Mn. 55604; (218) 387-1750

**ISABELLA WORK STATION;** 2759 Highway 1, Isabella, Mn. 55607; (218) 323-7722

**KAWISHIWI RANGER DISTRICT;** 118 South 4th Avenue East, Ely, Mn. 55731; (218) 365-6185

**LACROIX RANGER DISTRICT;** P.O. Box 1085; Cook Mn. 55723; (218) 666-5251

**LAURENTIAN RANGER DISTRICT;** 318 Forestry Road; Aurora, Mn. 55705; (218) 229-3371

**TOFTE RANGER DISTRICT;** Tofte, Mn. 55615; (218) 663-7981

**VOYAGEUR VISITOR CENTER;** 118 South 4th Avenue East, Ely, Mn. 55731 (mailing address) (218) 365-6126

Please place check (✓) next to information you would like to receive and send to Forest Supervisors office in Duluth.

**BWCAW INFORMATION PACKET** \_\_\_\_\_

**CAMPGROUNDS\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**CANOEING OUTSIDE WILDERNESS\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**HIKING\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**COLOR AUTO TOURS\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**BERRY PICKING/MUSHROOMING\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**FISHING\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAP INFORMATION\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**WINTER SPORTS\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGHTSEEING\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**WILDLIFE\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**PICKNICING\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**CAMPING\*** \_\_\_\_\_

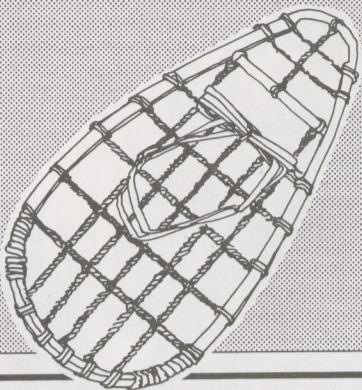
**INFO ON SPECIFIC DISTRICT** \_\_\_\_\_

**LAKE STATES INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION; CATALOG OF BOOKS ON THIS REGION.** \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER\*** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Fill in specific area or recreation opportunity.

# WINTER



## THE OJIBWA'S WINTER

by Lindy jr.

A light falling of snow was all that remained of the recent storm that had passed through the area. In the camp, the woman bent over her birch bark pot of wild rice and moose meat, stirring the evening's meal. It was warm where the woman worked, standing comfortably between the fire and the two fire reflectors. Out on the frozen lake her husband lay upon a bear skin near a hole chipped through the ice. Draped above him, over a small tripod structure, were more skins. In the semi-darkness he twirled a hand carved lure resembling a swimming yellow perch, hoping to attract northern pike. In the light that filtered through the ice, the man could make out the shadowy forms of the fish he would spear, adding them to their stores of food for this winter.

The woman once more checked the pot of rice to see if she needed to replace the heated stones that were used in the cooking of their food. Pausing in her work the woman reflected on the time she and her husband had spent this past fall gathering their plentiful stores of food for this winter. She enjoyed the time she had with her husband when they would go out and gather the wild rice in their canoe. Later they had shared the work of parching, the dancing on, and then winnowing the rice. How proud she was each time her husband came back into camp with fresh meat to be dried for winter use. She recalled her long hours of work skinning these animals, cutting the meat into thin strips for drying, and the scraping of the skins for the making of leather.

Now that the long hard work of preparation was over they could relax, confident that they were ready for winter. Her thoughts turned to the birch bark storage baskets that lay in their wigwam, full of wild rice, maple sugar, and dried fish, deer, bear, and moose meat. Their wigwam had enough hides and blanket robes to keep the children and themselves warm during the cold winter nights. This had truly been a very good year.

## ICE IS NICE

**Ice fishing in the Superior National Forest**  
by Bob Cary

In the northern lakes area, where there is as much and sometimes more winter than summer, ice fishing is a way of life. In part, this has to do with the wide variety of sportfish—northern pike, walleyes, lake trout, stream trout (in lakes) and panfish. There are distinct seasons for these species and some special regulations.

As soon as the lake freezes over, in late November or early December, the walleyes and northern pike brigades hit the ice,

Looking over the lake, watching her husband fish, a swift, breeze blew briefly by her from the south-west. Hearing a small sound carried upon the wind, she looked toward that direction. She saw a dark figure walking through the forest, coming toward her camp. As the figure came closer she recognized her husband's father.

"Boo zho, my father," she called happily.

"Boo zho, my daughter," the man called back.

The woman noticed that several of her father's leather fringes were missing from his hunting shirt. The reason for this was on his feet. He was wearing a crude set of snowshoes he made as he weathered the blizzard that caught him in the middle of his journey to his son's winter camp. He had used these fringes to construct the snowshoes out of willow branches, using the leather strips to tie all the pieces together. With the make-shift snowshoes he was able to wade through the deep snow that was left after the storm.

During the blizzard he had built a snow shelter to escape the brunt of the storm. He accomplished this by heaping snow into a huge pile, and after it had properly settled, digging out the center to form a relatively warm shelter. His winter clothing was a double layer of skins. The outer layer had the deer hair left on. This added insulation kept him warm enough through the storm.

With the arrival of the grandfather, all the children excitedly greeted him. Trying to climb on him, tugging him this way and that, the children fought to get his attention. Hearing the commotion coming from his camp, the man stopped fishing to see what was happening. Then he too joined in welcoming his father. Soon after, the woman announced that the stew was ready to eat, and all sat down around the fire to enjoy the food.

After the evening meal of wild rice and moose meat, which had been seasoned with maple sugar, the father and the man

went out into the surrounding woods. They needed to check the man's traps, to insure that they were still in working order and not covered by snow. They were followed by the oldest son, who watched his father and grandfather so he could learn the skills needed to become a successful trapper. The other children were sent into the woods to gather wood for the wigwam's fire that night and for the next day's fire making needs.

Later in camp, everyone gathered around the fire once more to sing songs and listen to the grandfather's stories. The man and woman quietly continued to make needed items while they listened. The man repaired his fishing net for the coming spring's fishing. The woman worked on new winter moccasins from rabbit skins; the hair turned inside for warmth. When the fire died down the family entered their wigwam to sleep. The woman woke periodically through the night to replenish the small fire they kept burning.

The next morning, after eating, the grandfather, the man, and the oldest son go out to check the man's traps for any animals caught during the night. While checking the traps they come across the fresh tracks of a white-tail deer which they follow and drive into a snow bank, floundering the animal. They then have an easy time of catching up to the deer and killing it. The father and the man leave the oldest son to dress out the deer while they continue to check the traps. Returning to the son, each takes a portion of the deer's meat, wrapped in hide, to bring back to camp for a feast, in celebration of the grandfather's visit.

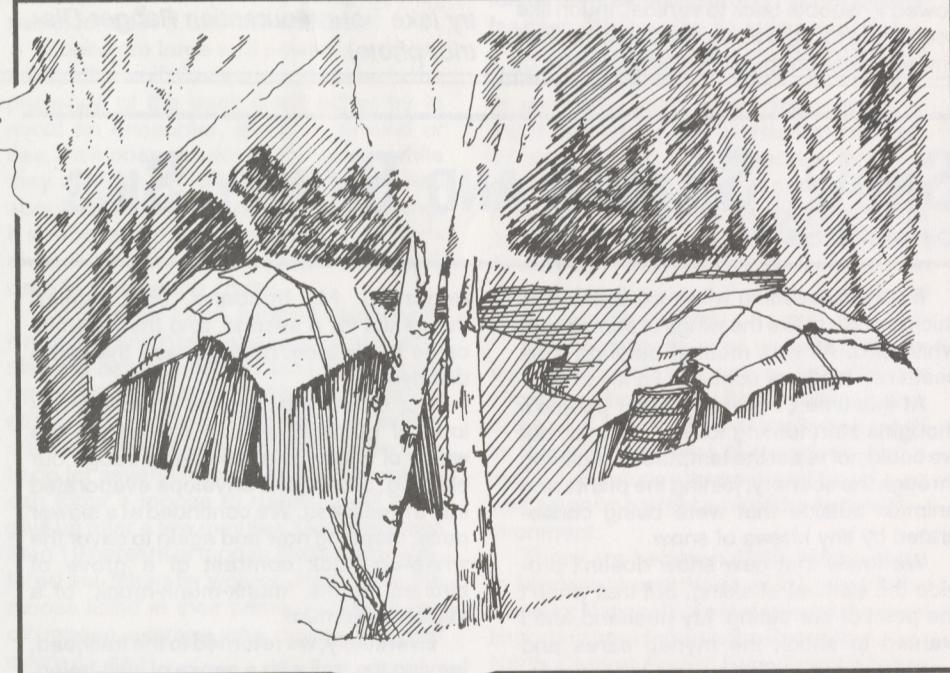
Though the winters in Minnesota can be cold, the Ojibwa Indian was well adapted to his or her environment. They enjoyed all the seasons and what each had to offer. They knew nature intimately and found all of their needs in her bounteous generosity. Their world was one of true harmony with nature.

## A Window To The Past

Excavation of the Misiano archeological site at McDougal Lake campground near Isabella will resume from June 30 through August 16. Last year, remains dating back several thousand years were found. Very little is known about the earliest periods of human habitation in northeastern Minnesota, so the opportunity to explore these ancient remains is both challenging and exciting.

The excavation is open to the public seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will also be special activity days which feature demonstrations of various crafts and skills, such as chipping stone tools, spear throwing, and making clay pots. Accept our invitation to learn more about your heritage by visiting the site and witnessing, first hand, exploration into the unknown past.

Lindy jr. is the pen name for Clifford C. Lindquist of Cloquet, MN., who is pursuing a degree in journalism and fine art. He has spent the last seventeen years in independent study of primitive wilderness survival and Native American cultures.



sometimes even before all the lakes are covered. The smaller, shallower lakes usually freeze first and when there are three to four inches of frozen surface, insulated boots are pounding over the ice. Veteran ice anglers, while a hardy lot, are not foolish. The early birds are careful to test the ice as they move out, checking the thickness frequently for safety. Most lakes have underwater springs and non-visible currents which create areas of thin ice. Old timers know these spots by experience and are careful to avoid them. Neophytes are well advised to go with someone who knows the lakes and knows the ice...or wait until the ice is really thick and then follow the footprints of earlier fisherfolk.

Ice fishing, generally, takes two forms; angling from ice shelters (portable or semi-

permanent) or angling out in the open, taking the wind and weather as it comes. Ice shanties are licensed by state law and the angler's name and address must be affixed to the outside. Portable shelters which are erected and taken down with each trip are becoming more popular, particularly from the standpoint of mobility. The more permanent shelters are sometimes equipped with tables, chairs and stoves, and can be quite comfortable even in the bitterest, sub-zero weather. Portable shelters not only serve as windbreaks, but are built to shut out the light, allowing the angler to see down 10 to 20 feet beneath the surface, often watching fish swimming about below.

Early season northern pike and walleye angling is usually a matter of getting a live

minnow down the hole on a hook or a weighted jig. Most walleye are taken on chubs or fathead minnows on or near the bottom. Northern pike are cruisers and are usually found suspended between the bottom and the surface, often about six feet below the ice. Large live suckers or frozen smelt are effective for pike which may run up to 20 pounds and more. Pike anglers tend toward heavy duty tackle and usually carry along a gaff hook to pull their trophies out of the hole.

Minnesota law allows the winter angler to use two poles for most fishing and many anglers will put a small minnow on the bottom for walleyes, a large minnow up shallow for pike. Some anglers use a large spoon, like a Daredevil for pike, jigging it with a chunk of minnow on the hook. A wire

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# WINTER ...continued

leader is necessary for pike fishing to prevent the fish from tearing loose with their huge teeth.

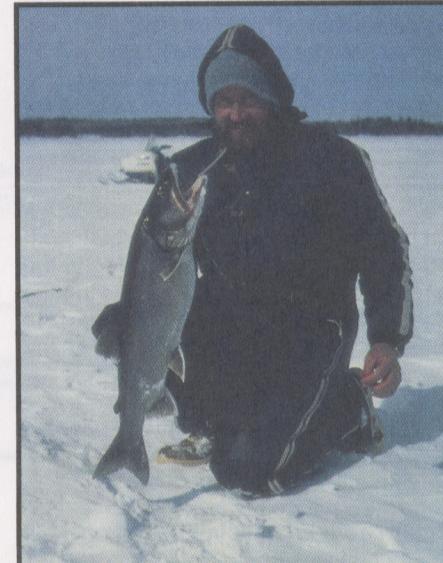
The Saturday closest to the middle of January, the trout season opens. Lake trout are pursued on many waters throughout the Superior National Forest. Stream trout - rainbows, brooks and splake (speckled trout - lake trout hybrids) are found in dozens of lakes from easy drive-up access waters to remote BWCAW jewels. Two lines are allowed for lake trout, but only one for stream trout.

Lake trout anglers usually ply their sport where the water depth is 30 to 60 feet deep. A common method of fishing is to use frozen ciscos - herring-like minnows obtainable in any bait shop which are simply lowered through the hole and allowed to rest on the lake bottom or suspended part way to the surface. The other method is to jig metal lures such as Swedish Pimples, Kastmasters, spoons and "airplane baits" (jigs with wings that sail in circles when the line is slackened). Anglers whip the rod up sharply, then drop it, allowing the lure to twist and wobble back to vertical. Why trout hit these baits, no one knows, but they certainly do.

Stream trout are altogether different. They are usually found in much shallower water. Brook trout are mainly taken where the water is less than eight feet deep. Rainbows and splake are found at depths of 10 feet to 20 feet. Small spoons and metal lures are used for these trout, usually with the addition of crappie minnows or a half minnow on the hook. Some anglers are successful with panfish ice flies baited with wax worms or other grubs. The spoons and metal lure are jiggled upward and allowed to wobble back to vertical, much like ice fishing for lake trout. The fish is hooked immediately on the strike. With worms or

grubs, the trout is allowed to bite a little, even "run" with the bait before the hook is set. Light tackle, four to six-pound line, and small lures are required for stream trout. Heavier rods and reels, eight to 12-pound line works best for lake trout. A special state trout stamp is required for fishing stream trout.

Pike and walleye fishing ends in mid-February. Trout fishing ends in mid-March. But about this time, crappies begin to move. In the latter part of March and into April, as long as the ice is safe, anglers enjoy some of the best sport of the year. Crappies are found at depths ranging from 15 to 30 feet, sometimes suspended, sometimes just off the bottom. Most anglers use small hooks and tiny "crappie" minnows weighted with a split shot and set at the correct depth with a bobber. Any type of a rod will do since the fish are usually pulled up hand-over-hand once the hook is set. On a good day, when the sun is high, the temperature warms enough so the anglers can fish barehanded, crappies will often bite all day long. How-



Art Lindgren hoists a hefty northcountry lake trout (Laurentian Ranger District photo)



The true beauty of a Superior National Forest winter is in its awesome starkness. (LaCroix Ranger District photo)

ever, best bets are mid-morning and just before sunset.

Bait shops are an excellent source of current information on ice fishing. Depth maps of most lakes can be obtained from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Also, lakes in each county are listed as to fish species. There are several books with information on fish, including Brian Toffe's new angling series listing the lakes in each tourist area.

In addition to providing some excellent winter sport and some fine eating, ice fishing has another noticeable attribute: no mosquitos.

*Bob Cary is the editor of the Ely Echo newspaper, a book author and a freelance writer who likes to fish but isn't (we've heard) very good at it.*

## SNOW, SILENCE AND SKINNY SKIS

by Marie Sales

It was an evening when the snow falls thick and silent like the wings of some great white bird. All was muffled beneath it as scattered feathers continue lightly to fall.

At this time of evening, most people's thoughts start turning towards dinner, but we could not resist the temptation of gliding through the scenery, joining the plants and animals outside that were being consecrated by tiny kisses of snow.

We knew that new snow doesn't provide the swiftest of skiing, but that wasn't the point of our outing. My husband and I wanted to shuck the myriad cares and worries of our work day and indoor existence in the silent, glittering forest, to hear the gentle swooshing of our skis along a trail, and to re-connect with nature.

We hurriedly waxed our skis, loaded into our four-wheel drive, and set off, laughing at the uncrowded streets that meant others judged this snow too deep to venture out.

We pulled up to a Superior National Forest trailhead, attached our feet to skinny skis, our hands to poles and launched into six inches of new powder. No wind blew, and it was remarkable to see every single twig on every single tree or bush adorned with a three-inch slab of flakes.

After about a mile we stopped for a rest. Our initial adrenaline rush from being free and active in the woods abated, leaving us responsive to our surroundings.

The silence was deafening. Thud, thud, thud. "My gosh, I can hear my heart," I

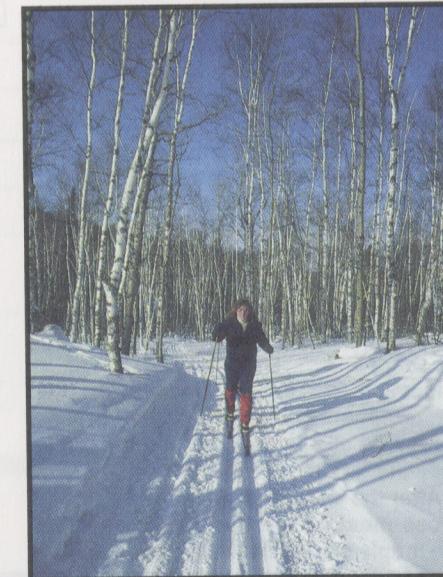
remarked. My husband, Jim, looked thoughtful for a second, and then a smile came to his face, having made the same discovery.

Our breath mist formed a small envelope of humidity around us, as did the wisps of steam heat seeping through our clothing. Slowly, the envelope evaporated into the stillness. We continued at a slower pace, stopping now and again to savor the white-on-black contrast of a grove of birches, or the "munk-munk-munk" of a startled chipmunk.

Eventually, we returned to the trailhead, leaving the trail with a sense of well-being. The feeling isn't brought about by any mystical, earth-shaking natural wonder, but from just being OUT THERE. Good Medicine, I've heard it called. It's a dose of nature everyone needs to stay sane.

So, don't get crazy! Come to the Superior National Forest and cross-country ski! The Forest has over sixteen separate cross-country ski areas with nearly 450 miles of groomed trail. Ability levels for every type of skier are catered to on the groomed trails. For the independent sort, who hates being set into a certain course, there are about two million acres of trackless woods in the Superior National Forest. Hundreds of miles of lake routes and unplowed Forest Roads also serve well if you want to escape the beaten path.

The groomed trails are seldom crowded. If you plan to stay at a resort or motel, it's best to make your reservations as early as



Winter welcomes the cross country skier with its blue skies, ample snow and special silence. (Michael Furtman photo)

possible.

Each Ranger District on the Forest has groomed trails. Most of the trails are maintained regularly, either by the Forest Service, community groups, or businesses.

There are a few things you need to make sure you have or do before you set out on the Forest's trails. One thing you may not be aware of is that a state ski license is required by Minnesota state law for cross-country skiers between the ages of 16-64 who ski on non-federally maintained trails. The money from these licenses is used to help maintain and develop trails. Although the trail you plan to

use is on federal land, state funds may have been used to develop and maintain it. Check with the nearest Ranger Station or resort operator to know for sure if a pass is needed.

The cost for a year-long family ski license is \$7.50, but licenses may be purchased from sports stores or the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for a day, year, or three years.

Ski-skating is not possible or recommended on most of the Forest's trails. Most are narrow, tree-lined and single-tracked. However, there are two exceptions. Giants Ridge maintains trails suitable for traditional and skate-skiers. Part of the North Shore Mountains Ski Trail is also designed with skaters in mind.

Another good idea (and one your mother would agree with) is to make sure you wear several layers of clothing that will allow you to adjust to varying temperatures and exertion levels. It's also handy to carry a small day pack. When you get too hot, you can put your discarded clothing layers in it, and use it also to carry food and water.

Extra food and water are essential because in winter you burn more calories and dehydrate more quickly than at other times of year. Your body can lose up to a gallon (a gallon!) of fluid a day when you're active. Replacing the lost fluids is important for your health.

Eating snow is not a good source of water when you're dehydrated because you pay a high price in terms of energy and body cooling for the amount of water you get. In an emergency situation, it's better to melt snow in a container over a fire.

Other emergency items you should consider carrying in your pack are matches, a compass, a map of the area, extra warm clothes, a knife, a first aid kit, duct tape for

...Continued on pg. 8

# GREY WOLVES OF THE SUPERIOR

by Doris Gerdes

"You can look at a gray wolf standing in the snow in winter twilight and not see him at all." (Barry Lopez - *Of Wolves and Men*)

Out on the plains man always wolfed in winter...at least as long as he could remember. The winter of 1870 was no different. Ride out, shoot a couple of buffalo and lace the carcasses with strychnine. Next morning, dress out 10 or 20 wolves. Market value for pelts was good.

Competition between the wolf and the hunters, farmers and ranchers of colonial American was seen as a threat to their goal of taming the land. Between 1870 and 1877, 55,000 pelts a year were sold and bounty hunters were hired to further reduce the wolf population. In 1915, Congress called for the deliberate termination of wolves through Federal predator control programs. As a result, the status of the North American Gray Wolf (*Canis Lupus*), which was once found throughout most of the northern hemisphere, has become precarious in the lower 48 states.

The Eastern Timber Wolf (*Canis Lupus Lycaon*), 1 of 24 subspecies of the gray wolf, originally occurred throughout most of the eastern U.S. and southeastern Canada. Now the U.S. population is restricted to Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, representing 3 percent of its original range. Minnesota had a bounty on wolves until as late as 1965. It was not until the Endangered Species Act of 1973 that the wolf was protected rather than persecuted by law. Since then, the classification of the wolf has been changed to "Threatened" in Minnesota to allow the killing of problem wolves that prey on livestock.

Few species have had such a diversity of relationships with humans as has the wolf. Early humans tamed and domesticated wolves. Native Americans honored them and they were hated and feared by colonists. Moderns have developed attitudes ranging from protectionists to dominionist which stem from fundamental differences in perception, understanding and concern for the wolf. Perhaps the paradox that this shy, intelligent, highly social animal is also a consummate predator is partly responsible for our lack of solidarity concerning the inherent rights of wolves.

"Hearsay should only be accepted with skepticism by anyone interested in learning the truth about any matter." (L. David Mech - *The Wolf*)

Wolves have existed with basically the same form and function since the Pleistocene, 1 million years ago. The largest wild member of the dog family (*Canidae*) and average adult male weighs 100 pounds, stands 2 feet tall and about 5 feet long. Fine underfur and long guard hairs conserve a high proportion of body heat and allow them to function in extreme cold conditions. They are capable of tireless travel at

5 mph and can reach a running speed of 35-40 mph. Daily travels within their home range can be up to 50 miles. Under favorable conditions, wolves can detect odors up to 1.5 miles away and have a keen sense of hearing. A wolf's entire digestive system is designed for feast or famine feeding; its stomach is capable of holding 20-25 pounds of food at a time, which can be digested in just a few hours. Predatory behavior is acquired.

A young wolf learns what to eat and how to hunt from the pack, a family group of generally from 5-8 individuals. The entire pack participates in rearing the young. Strong affectional ties develop and are reinforced. Order is maintained in a hierarchy where one wolf greets another by demonstrating its dominance and the other its submission. Most often, the adult male is dominant to the adult female and pups. A male order and a female order develop among the adults and the pups develop a social rank among themselves through play fighting.

They howl to assemble the pack, express territoriality, defend the pups, the den and the kill. There are other vocalizations such as growling, whining and barking and the yapping of the pups. Visual displays including postures of various body parts reinforce social status. Scent marking delineates their territory. There is playful chasing, ambushing and mock fighting.

Social interactions intensify as the late winter breeding season approaches. There is definite mate preference and generally the alpha or lead male and female mate. There is much sniffing, nipping, grooming, head rubbing, snout grabbing, tail wagging and general play among the pair at this time. This sexual tie leads to a strong parent/offspring bond.

After a 63 day gestation, the young are born blind and helpless. For the first two months, the female stays with the pups and the male and other pack members hunt for them and feed them. By October, pups can weigh 60 pounds and may join the adults in travel. The lifespan of a wolf in the wild is about 10 years. They can die from diseases like Lyme's or Canine parvovirus, parasites such as heartworm or from starvation, struggles between packs, injuries by prey or exploitation and persecution by humans.

"Whether or not wolves are permitted to survive . . . depends completely on the attitudes of the public. We must develop an attitude [toward the wolf] based on an understanding of the natural processes." (L. David Mech - *The Wolf*)

Although wolves will eat many kinds of small backboned animals, it is much more efficient to concentrate on large animals. They expend much less energy per pound of meat by hunting large animals. In Minnesota this means moose, deer and beaver make up between 59-96 percent of a wolf's diet. Where humans have substituted domestic animals for wild ones, wolves have made a similar substitution in their diet.

It is well understood that predators in general will remove individuals who are more easily caught. Domestic animals, who have not evolved adaptations in order to escape being caught, fall into this category. It is also known that predation does not function independently. When there is a surplus of prey species as in deer yards or farm yards, the predation rate will increase. This may account for wolves being accused of taking the best and wasting the rest. In wild prey, wolves will eat at least 75



percent of the carcass, the rest becoming an important part of the diets of foxes, ravens, eagles, coyotes and other carrion eaters.

Wolves hunt by travelling throughout their territory, locating prey by direct scenting, tracking or chance encounter. If two or more species of large prey inhabit the same area, they will concentrate on the species which is the smallest and easiest to catch. Even when moose are more abundant than deer, wolves will apparently select for deer if they are available.

Moose are large and powerful and can easily kill a wolf. Once a moose detects the presence of the pack it will either try to avoid an encounter, stand its ground or flee. If a moose can detect the wolves while they are still 200-300 yards away, it has about a 50/50 chance of escape by fleeing. If a moose can stay more than 100 yards ahead for 10-15 seconds, wolves will usually give up the chase.

On the other hand, confidence pays off. It requires much less energy for a moose to stand at bay and defend itself. Wolves will rarely attack a moose that is concentrating strictly on defense; charging and lashing out with its front hoofs, which it may be able to do for several hours. Unless the wolves can force a moose to run they will often give up after a few minutes. Generally less than 10 percent of moose that are encountered are taken by wolves. Rarely are the moose killed in their prime. Wolves living off moose average one moose per wolf every 45 days.

The primary prey of wolves in Minnesota is white-tailed deer, though they are not easily caught. Deer depend on their ability to detect wolves at a distance, relying on alertness and speed for defense. If snow depth is greater than 16 inches or there are many drifts or blowdowns, wolves will lose ground quickly in pursuit. Most wolf-killed deer found during the winter are on frozen lakes, rivers and ponds, where deer can be caught quickly. Deer are also easy prey during rare conditions when the snow crusts hard enough to hold a bounding wolf but not the sharp hooved deer. On the average, one deer is taken per wolf every 18 days.

Although a wolf can swim and will often pursue its prey into the water, open water provides a great deal of protection for most prey. Beavers are safe from wolves while

in the water and during the winter when they are locked beneath the ice. But, from the time they emerge through cracks in the ice in early March, through the summer and fall when they venture onto shore for fresh food, they can easily be killed by wolves. Although beavers are considered a secondary food source, a wolf will rarely fail to investigate any beaver lodge it passes by. If it finds fresh scent of beaver that has gone onto land and not returned, it will follow the trail and catch up to the beaver far away from water, its sole protection.

"In primitive settings the rules are different. The resource is not measured in so many trees or so many miles of trout stream or any particular number of deer or elk. The resource is not a commodity but rather a process. That process is wildness, sadly diminished by the absence of wolves." (Robert Redford - *The Wolf. A Howling in America's National Parks. A National Park Service Video*)

Most people view the wolf in highly favorable and positive terms. They have a strong appreciation for the ecological value of the wolf. Most have a desire to see a wolf in the wild and feel that wolves are a symbol of nature's wonder and beauty, as well as an important part of the natural environment.

There are between 1200-1500 wolves in Minnesota and those which inhabit the Superior National Forest represent the most important population in the lower 48 states. North Central Forest Experiment Station and the Fish and Wildlife Service have been studying these wolves for over 20 years. Presently there are 32 wolves from 12 packs with radio collars. One wolf is in her 9th year of study. There are also 26 radio-collared adult deer in the same area for the study of predator/prey relationships.

Wisconsin has about 30 wolves and Michigan has only 5-10 animals in the Upper Peninsula and 11-14 on Isle Royale National Park, an island in Lake Superior. Lyme's disease and canine parvovirus, along with genetic inbreeding may explain the fact that these numbers are the lowest in 30 years of study of this island's wolves. The National Park Service, which manages the island, has decided to follow its general policy of not interfering with natural processes and will not take action to prevent the wolf populations from dying out of natural causes. ... Continued on pg. 8



## Permits Needed For BWCAW Wilderness Travel

All overnight visitors travelling in the BWCAW between May 1 and September 30 must have a visitor's permit in possession. Day visitors must also get a permit if they plan to use a motor unless they are using the Crane Lake or Little Vermilion Lake entrance point. Day motor use for this entry point or any other non-motorized day users do not need a visitors' permit.

Permits can be obtained free of charge from any Superior National Forest Office or from some outfitters, resorts and camps, as early as 24 hours ahead of the planned trip. The permit may only be used by the party leader or alternate - they are not transferable. Identification is required and will be asked for during periodic checks at landings and in the BWCAW.

Permits can be reserved in advance, as well. A reservation assures you that a permit to enter the BWCAW on a specific date and at a certain entry point will be available. A reservation is recommended if you have a specific preference for an entry point or certain date.

A \$5.00 non-refundable fee is charged for each reservation. All reservations are made through a central office. Reservations are accepted by mail beginning January 15 each year at the following address:

**BWCAW Reservations**  
Superior National Forest  
P.O. Box 338  
Duluth, MN 55801

You may also make reservations over the phone beginning February 1 with the use of a valid VISA or MasterCard credit card by calling (218) 720-5440.



No matter where you wander in the Superior, the lake country's beauty awaits you. (LaCroix Ranger District photo)

### SKINNY SKIS...continued

temporary equipment repairs, and a metal container for melting snow.

More safety tips mom will agree with are: Don't ski alone. Check the forecast for storms. Check each other periodically for signs of hypothermia and frostbite. Let someone back home or at the resort know your proposed route and itinerary. Cross lakes and river cautiously.

All these things can make your cross-country ski trip in the Superior National Forest a safe success. You can return home with a sparkle in your eyes, roses on your cheeks, and a satisfying sense of having worked hard - just the medicine you needed!

*Marie Sales, besides swishing through deep snow, deftly handles drifts of paper in her position as Public Affairs Specialist for the Superior National Forest.*

### WOLVES...continued

The Eastern Timber Wolf recovery plan, headed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, calls for maintaining the Minnesota population at between 1250-1400 wolves, for increasing the Wisconsin population to 80 and the Michigan population to 60, with one-third to one-half of those on Isle Royale.

The Superior National Forest is working to maintain the wolf and promote its re-establishment and protection in its primary range and as much of its former range as feasible. But it is the public, with an attitude of toleration, understanding and appreciation for its inherent value in a natural community, who will determine the fate of the wolf.

*Doris Gerdes is particularly interested in plants and non-game animals and works as a Wildlife Biologist on the Kawishiwi Ranger District.*



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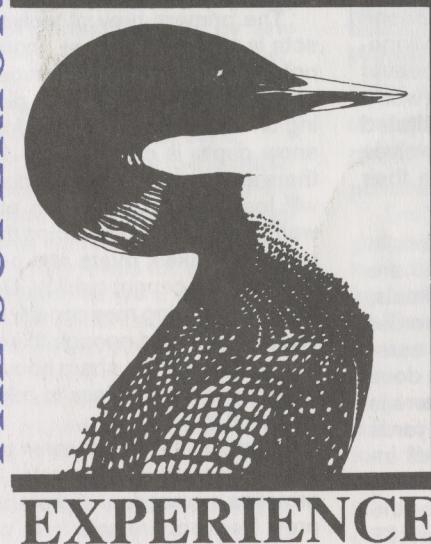


A northern forest's beauty is often of small scale. (Isabella Work Station photo)

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*BR*